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REFERENCE TITLE: state highway designation

State of Arizona
House of Representatives
Forty-sixth Legislature
First Regular Session
2003

HJR 2002

Introduced by
Representatives Laughter, Jackson Jr: Burton Cahill, Johnson, Nichols,
Rosati

A JOINT RESOLUTION

DESIGNATING THE PORTION OF STATE HIGHWAY 264 LOCATED BETWEEN TUBA CITY AND WINDOW ROCK THAT CONNECTS TO HIGHWAY 264 THAT IS DESIGNATED AS THE "NAVAJO CODE TALKER HIGHWAY" IN NEW MEXICO AS THE "NAVAJO CODE TALKER HIGHWAY" IN HONOR OF THE NAVAJO CODE TALKERS.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Whereas, on December 7, 1941, the Japanese Empire attacked Pearl Harbor
2 and the United States Congress declared war the following day; and

3 Whereas, the military code developed by the United States for
4 transmitting messages had been deciphered by the Japanese and a search was
5 made by United States intelligence to develop new means to counter the enemy;
6 and

7 Whereas, military commanders explored the possibility that the extreme
8 complexity of Navajo might make it a valuable military code. Navajo, an
9 unwritten language that has no alphabet or symbols, proved to be an
10 undecipherable code since its syntax and tonal qualities, including its
11 dialects, make it unintelligible to all except those who have had extensive
12 training and exposure to it. Initial tests using the Navajo language as a
13 code demonstrated that the Navajos could encode, transmit and decode a
14 three-line English message in twenty seconds, a feat that took machines
15 thirty minutes to accomplish; and

16 Whereas, the United States government called upon the Navajo Nation to
17 support the military effort by recruiting and enlisting twenty-nine Navajo
18 men to serve as Marine Corps radio operators in 1942. At the time, the
19 Navajos often were treated as second-class citizens and they were generally
20 discouraged from using their native language. The Navajo Marine Corps radio
21 operators, who became known as the "Navajo Code Talkers", developed an
22 unbreakable code using their native language to communicate military
23 messages, and created a dictionary and numerous words for military terms that
24 did not exist in Navajo. By 1945, the number of Navajo enlistees stood at
25 approximately five hundred forty, with around four hundred of those serving
26 as trained Code Talkers; and

27 Whereas, the Navajo language, discouraged in the past, was instrumental
28 in developing the most significant and successful military code of the time.
29 This remarkable code was used extensively throughout the Pacific theater
30 during the war. At Iwo Jima alone, six Navajo Code Talkers worked around the
31 clock, passing more than eight hundred error-free messages in a forty-eight
32 hour period. Use of the Navajo Code was so successful that military
33 commanders credited it with saving the lives of countless American soldiers
34 and in the success of United States engagements in the battles of
35 Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima, Peleliu and Okinawa. Much to the
36 enemy's frustration, they were never able to decipher the Navajo Code; and

37 Whereas, the Navajo Code was kept secret by the Department of Defense
38 for twenty-three years after the end of World War II. Following the
39 conclusion of World War II, the Department of Defense maintained the secrecy
40 of the Navajo Code until it was declassified in 1968. Only then did the
41 exceptional sacrifice and valor of these brave and resourceful Native
42 Americans emerge from history. Their skill, speed and accuracy in using the
43 unique Navajo Code remains a feat unparalleled in our nation's military
44 endeavors and the Navajo Code Talkers are deserving of the highest praise;
45 and

1 Whereas, the Navajo Code Talkers distinguished themselves in performing
2 a unique, highly successful communications operation that greatly assisted in
3 saving countless lives and hastened the end of World War II in the Pacific.
4 The Navajo Code Talkers have performed an important service to the
5 preservation of democracy, and they are deserving of continuing recognition
6 for their efforts.

7 Therefore

8 Be it resolved by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

9 1. That, notwithstanding section 41-836, Arizona Revised Statutes, the
10 portion of state highway 264 located between Tuba City and Window Rock that
11 connects to highway 264 that is designated as the Navajo Code Talker Highway
12 in New Mexico be designated as the "Navajo Code Talker Highway", except that
13 the portion of the highway that runs through the Hopi Indian reservation
14 shall not be designated as such.

15 2. That the Department of Transportation approve, place and maintain
16 appropriate signage to identify the Navajo Code Talker Highway.

17 3. That the Secretary of State transmit copies of this Resolution to
18 the Director of the Department of Transportation, the President of the Navajo
19 Nation and the news media of Arizona.